

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 11441 281849Z

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ACTION CU-04

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7071

INFO USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 11441

E.O. 11652: GDS

LOYWS: OGEN

SUBJECT: USIS LIBRARIES

1. DURING CALL ON SAAD HASHMI, DIRECTOR OF COORDINATION, MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, SEPTEMBER 26, BY PAO AND CAO (IN COURSE OF WHICH HE INFORMED US OF LIBERALIZED GOI REGULATIONS ON STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED IN SEPTEL), HASHMI ALSO ASKED WHETHER WE WOULD NOT BE INTERESTED IN REOPENING OUR LIBRARIES, I.E., THOSE WHICH HAD BEEN CLOSED IN 1969 IN THE NON-CONSULAR CITIES OF LUCKNOW, HYDERABAD, BANGALORE, TRIVANDRUM AND PATNA.
2. EARLIER, INAM RAHMAN, SECRETARY OF THE INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS, HAD RAISED THIS SAME POSSIBILITY MORE INFORMALLY WITH THE PAO AND OTHER USIS OFFICERS. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT AMBASSADOR T. N. KAUL HAD ALSO MENTIONED THIS SUBJECT TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY JOHN RICHARDSON IN JUNE.
3. HASHMI OF COURSE WAS TALKING ABOUT REOPENING OUR LIBRARIES UNDER THE "FACADE" (TO USE HIS TERM) OF THE INDIAN COUNCIL OF CULTURAL RELATIONS. THE ICCR, HE REMINDED, CAME UNDER THE MEWW AND "IS VERY OPEN AND EASY TO WORK WITH."
4. COMMENT: GIVEN THE HISTORY OF THE BRANCH LIBRARY CLOSURES, OUR GENERAL RELUCTANCE TO TAKE THE WORD OF A SINGLE MIDDLE-LEVEL MEA OFFICIAL AS EVIDENCE OF A LASTING TREND, WE PROPOSE TO BE WARY IN RESPONDING TO THIS OVERTURE, IF INDEED THAT IS WHAT IT WAS. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE VIEW THE EXPANSION AND

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NEW DE 11441 281849Z

IMPROVEMENT OF OUR LIBRARIES AS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT -- THE

AMBASSADOR SEES THAT AS THE HIGHEST PRIORITY OF USIS IN INDIA --
AND DO NOT WISH TO CLOSE ANY OPTIONS. WE WILL THEREFORE

PURSUE THIS MATTER, ALBEIT CAUTIOUSLY.
SCHNEIDER

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